

MR. COBBETT'S TAKING LEAVE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN.

MY BELOVED COUNTRYMEN,

SOON after this reaches your eyes, those of the writer will, possibly, have taken the last glimpse of the land that gave him birth, the land in which his parents lie buried, the land of which he has always been so proud, the land in which he leaves a people, whom he shall to his last breath, love and esteem beyond all the rest of mankind.

Every one, if he can do it without wrong to another, has a right to pursue the path to his own happiness; as my happiness, however, has long been inseparable from the hope of assisting in restoring the rights and liberties of my country, nothing could have induced me to quit that country, while there remained the smallest chance of my being able, by remaining, to continue to aid her cause. No such chance is now left. The laws, which have just been passed, especially if we take into view the real objects of those laws, forbid us to entertain the idea, that it would be possible to write on political subjects according to the dictates of truth and reason, without drawing down upon our heads certain

and swift destruction. It was well observed by Mr. BROUGHAM, in a late debate, that every writer, who opposes the present measures, "must now feel, that he sits down to write *"with a halter about his neck;"* an observation the justice of which must be obvious to all the world.

Leaving, therefore, all considerations of personal interest, personal feeling, and personal safety; leaving even the peace of mind of a numerous and most affectionate family wholly out of view, I have reasoned thus with myself: What is now left to be done? We have urged our claims with so much truth; we have established them so clearly on the ground of both law and reason, that there is no answer to us to be found other than that of a Suspension of our Personal Safety. If I still write in support of those claims, I must be blind not to see that a dungeon is my doom. If I write at all, and do not write in support of those claims I do not only degrade myself, but I do a great injury to the rights of the nation by appearing to abandon them. If I remain

here, I must, therefore, *cease to write*, either from compulsion or from a sense of duty to my countrymen; therefore, it is *impossible* to do any good to the cause of my country by remaining in it; but, if I remove to a country where I can write with perfect freedom, it is not only *possible*, but very *probable*, that I shall, sooner or later, be able to render that cause important and lasting services.

Upon this conclusion it is, that I have made my determination; for, though life would be scarcely worth preserving with the consciousness that I walked about my fields or slept in my bed merely at the mercy of a Secretary of State; though, under such circumstances, neither the song of the birds in Spring nor the well-strawed homestead in winter could make me forget that I and my rising family were slaves, still there is something so powerful in the thought of country and neighbourhood and home and friends, there is something so strong in the numerous and united ties with which these and endless other objects fasten the mind to a long-inhabited spot, that to tear oneself away, nearly approaches to the separating the soul from the body. But, then, on the other hand, when I asked myself: "What! Shall I submit in silence? Shall I be as dumb as one of my horses? Shall that indignation which burns within me be quenched? Shall I make no effort to preserve even the *chance* of assisting to better the lot of my unhappy country? Shall that mind, which has com-

municated its light and warmth to millions of other minds, now be extinguished for ever; and shall those, who, with thousands of pens at their command, still saw the tide of opinion rolling more and more heavily against them, now be for ever secure from that pen, by the efforts of which they feared being overwhelmed? Shall truth never again be uttered? Shall her voice never again be heard, even from a distant shore?"

Thus was the balance turned; and, my Countrymen, be you well assured, that, though I shall, if I live, be at a distance from you; though the ocean will roll between us, not all the barriers that nature as well as art can raise, shall be sufficient to prevent you from reading some part, at least, of what I write; and, notwithstanding all the wrongs, of which I justly complain; notwithstanding all the indignation that I feel; notwithstanding all the provocations that I have received, or that I may receive, never shall there drop from my pen any thing, which, according to the *law of the land*, I might not safely write and publish in England. Those, who have felt themselves supported by power, have practised towards me foul play without measure; but, though I shall have the means of retaliation in my hands, never will I follow their base example.

Though I quit my country, far be it from me to look upon her cause as desperate, and still farther be it from me to wish to infuse despondency into

your minds. *I can serve that cause no longer by remaining here*; but, the cause itself is so good, so just, so manifestly right and virtuous, and it has been combatted by means so unusual, so unnatural, and so violent, that it *must triumph* in the end. Besides, the circumstances of the country all tend to favour the cause of Reform. Not a tenth part of the evils of the system are yet in existence. The Country Gentlemen who have now been amongst our most decided Adversaries, will very soon be compelled for their own preservation, to become our friends and fellow-labourers. Not a fragment of their property will be left, if they do not speedily bestir themselves. They have been induced to believe that a Reform of the Parliament would expose them to plunder or degradation: but they will very soon find, that it will afford them the only chance of escaping both.—The wonder is, that they do not see this already, or rather, that they have not seen it for years past. But, they have been blinded by their foolish pride; that pride, which has nothing of mind belonging to it, and which, accompanied with a consciousness of a want of any natural superiority over the labouring Classes, seeks to indulge itself in a species of vindictive exercise of power. There has come into the heads of these people, I cannot very well tell how, a notion, that it is proper to consider the Labouring Classes as a *distinct cast*. They are called, now-a-days, by these gentlemen, “the *Peasantry*.”

This is a new term as applied to Englishmen. It is a French word, which in its literal sense, means *Country Folks*. But, in the sense, in which it is used in France and Flanders and Germany, it means, not only country people, or country folks, but also a *distinct and degraded class of persons*, who have no pretensions whatever to look upon themselves, in any sense, as belonging to the same *society*, or *community*, as the Gentry; but who ought always to be “*kept down in their proper place*.” And, it has become, of late, the fashion to consider the Labouring Classes in England in the same light, and to speak of them and treat them accordingly which never was the case in any former age.

The writings of MALTHUS, who considers men as *mere animals*, may have had influence in the producing of this change; and, we now frequently hear the working classes called, “the *population*,” just as we call the animals upon a farm, “the *stock*.” It is curious, too, that this contumely towards the great mass of the people should have grown into vogue amongst the Country Gentlemen and their families, at a time when they themselves are daily and hourly losing the estates descended to them from their forefathers. They see themselves stript of the means of keeping that hospitality, for which England was once so famed, and of which there remains nothing now but the *word* in the dictionary; they see themselves reduced to close up their windows, live in a corner of

their houses, sneak away to London, crib their servants in their wages, and hardly able to keep up a little tawdry show; and it would seem, that, for the contempt which they feel that their meanness must necessarily excite in the common people, they endeavour to avenge themselves, and at the same time to disguise their own humiliation, by their haughty and insolent deportment towards the latter; thus exhibiting that mixture of poverty and of pride, which has ever been deemed better calculated than any other union of qualities to draw down upon the possessors the most unfriendly of human feelings.

It is curious, also, that this fit of novel and ridiculous pride should have afflicted the minds of these persons at the very time that the working classes are become singularly enlightened. Not enlightened in the manner that the sons of Cant and Corruption would wish them to be. The conceited creatures in what is called high life, and who always judge of men by their clothes, imagine that the working classes of the people have their minds quite sufficiently occupied by the reading of what are called, "*religious and moral tracts.*" Simple, insipid dialogues and stories, calculated for the minds of children seven or eight years old, or for those of savages just beginning to be civilized. These conceited persons have no idea that the minds of the working classes ever presume to rise above this infantine level. But these conceited persons are most grossly deceived: they are the "*deluded*" part of the commu-

nity: deluded by a hireling and corrupt press, and by the conceit and insolence of their own minds. The working classes of the people understand well what they read; they dive into all matters connected with politics; they have a relish not only for interesting statement, for argument, for discussion; but the powers of *eloquence* are by no means lost upon them; and, in many, many instances, they have known themselves to possess infinitely greater powers of describing and of reasoning, than have ever been shewn generally by that description of persons, who, with MALTHUS, regard them as mere animals. In the report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords, it is observed, that, since the people have betaken themselves to this reading and this discussing, "*their character seems to be wholly changed.*" I believe it is indeed! For it is the natural effect of enlightening the mind to change the character. But, is not this change for the better? If it be not, why have we heard so much about the efforts for instructing the children of the poor? May; there are institutions for teaching *full-grown persons* to read and write; and a gentleman, upon whose word I can rely, assured me, that in a school of this sort, in Norfolk, he actually saw one woman teaching another woman to read, and that both teacher and pupil had *spectacles upon their noses!* What, then! Has it been intended, that these people, when taught to read, should read nothing but HANNAH MOORE'S "*Sinful Sally,*" and MRS. TRIMMER'S Dialogues?

Faith! The working classes of the people have a relish for no such trash. They are not to be amused by a recital of the manifold blessings of a state of things, in which they have not half enough to eat, nor half enough to cover their nakedness by day or to keep them from perishing by night. They are not to be amused with the pretty stories about "the bounty of Providence in making brambles for the purpose of tearing off pieces of the sheep's wool, in order that the little birds may come and get it to line their nests with to keep their young ones warm!" Stories like these are not sufficient to fill the minds of the working classes of the people. They want something more solid. They have had something more solid. Their minds, like a sheet of paper, have received the lasting impressions of undeniable fact and unanswerable argument; and it will always be a source of the greatest satisfaction to me to reflect, that I have been mainly instrumental in giving those impressions, which, I am very certain will never be effaced from the minds of the people of this country.

Do those, who pretend to believe that the people are *deluded*, and who say that these laws are not aimed against the people, but merely against their *seducers*; do these persons really imagine, that the people are *thus to be deceived*? Do they imagine, for instance, that the people who read my Register, will not in this case, regard any attack upon me, as an attack upon themselves? It is cu-

rious enough to observe how precisely the contrary the reasoning of these persons is in *all other* cases. An attack upon the Clergy is always deemed by them to be an attack upon Religion. An attack upon the King is always deemed by them to be an attack upon the Nation. And it is very notorious, that in all criminal cases, the language of the law is, that the offence has been committed against the peace of the realm, and in contempt of the king, his crown and dignity. Yet, in the present case, the *leaders* of the reformers are to be supposed to have no common interest with the reformers themselves; and it appears to be vainly imagined, that millions of men, all united in petitioning, in the most peaceable and orderly manner for one particular object, will be easily persuaded to believe, that those *who have taken the lead* amongst them may be very properly sacrificed, and, that too, *without any injury at all to the cause*! What should we think of an enemy in the field, who were to send over a flag of truce, and propose to us to give up our *Generals*? Only our *Generals*! That is *all*! The enemy has no objection to *us*: it is only our *Generals* that he wants; and, then, we shall have *peace* with him at once. There was once, the Fable tells us, a war between the *Wolves* and the *Sheep*, the latter being protected by a parcel of brave and skilful *Dogs*. The *Wolves* set on foot a negotiation, the object of which was everlasting peace between the parties, and the proposition was this on the part of the

Wolves, that there should be *hostages* on both sides; that the Wolves should put their *young ones* into the hands of the Sheep, and the sheep should put their *Dogs* into the hands of the Wolves. In evil hour the sheep agreed to this compact; and the first opportunity, the Wolves having no longer any Dogs to contend with, flew upon the fleecy fools and devoured them, and their lambs without mercy and without mitigation.

The flocks of reformers in England are not to be "*deluded*" in this manner. They will well know, that every blow which is aimed against the men who have taken the most prominent part in the cause of reform, is aimed against that cause itself and at every person who is attached to that cause, just as much, just as effectually, as a blow aimed at the head of a man is aimed at his fingers and his toes.

The Country gentlemen, therefore, will never see the day when the working classes will be again reconciled to them, unless they shall cordially take the lead amongst those working classes. This, I am in hopes, they will do; for, every day of their lives will make their own inevitable ruin more and more manifest. But whether they do this or not, the consequences of the present measures will, I am convinced, be the same. They will only tend to make the catastrophe more dreadful than it would otherwise have been. The Funding System will go regularly on producing misery upon the back of misery, and irritation upon the back of irritation. It is that great cause

which is constantly at work. Nothing can stop its progress, short of a reduction of the interest of the Debt; and as that measure seems to be rejected with obstinacy as persevering as are the destroying effects of the system itself, nothing can reasonably be expected but a violent dissolution.

The Nation will recollect how confidently the Ministers spoke last year of a speedy restoration to prosperity. Mr. Vansittart talked in a very gay and flippant style, about the raising of fourteen millions in taxes, in order to keep up the sinking fund, which fourteen millions, he said, would return back to the Country to enliven manufactures, commerce, and agriculture. The words were hardly out of his mouth, when I told you, that if the fourteen millions did return back to the Country, it would only be for the purpose of transferring fourteen millions worth more of the property of the Landowners, the Shipowners, the Manufacturers, the Farmers, and the Traders, from them to the pockets of the fundholders and the sinecure placemen and pensioners, together with all those who lived upon the taxes. But, all the former classes are now become so reduced in point of property; all their property has so fallen in value, that they have now nothing to offer in pledge for the money which the fundholders have to lend them; and the consequence of this is, that we now behold the curious spectacle of a loan made by the fundholders to the Government of France. This loan is stated at ten millions sterling. And

now my friends, pray observe what a France. The property of England is traffick is here going on! These ten millions of money have been raised in taxes upon us to pay the interest of the Debt or part of it. The fundholders having got this money into their possession, lend it to the Government of France, because we, who pay the taxes, are become too poor; our property is fallen too low in value for the fundholders to lend it to us; and thus ten millions-worth of the income of the Gentlemen and of the fruits of the labour of the people, are conveyed over to another nation, which must tend to give life to agriculture and trade and manufacturers in that nation, in just the same degree, that the operation tends to depress and ruin our own country. To make this as clear as daylight, let us suppose *the Isle of Wight* to be cut off from all trade and all interchange of commodities, with the rest of the Kingdom. Let us suppose that all the people in the Isle of Wight are compelled to pay a great portion of their incomes and of the fruit of their labour every year to be sent over and expended in the rest of the Kingdom; and that no part of what they thus pay is to go back again to the Isle of Wight, except the *interest* of it. Is it not evident, that the Isle of Wight must shortly become most wretchedly poor and miserable? Will not the proprietors there get rid of their property as fast as they are able, and will they not get away into the other parts of the Kingdom? Yes, and this is what the people of England are now doing with regard to

now going away, and all those who are able, and who do not live upon the taxes, are following the property as fast as they can. To take a single instance; suppose me to be living in the parish of Botley, or rather, to suppose something nearer the reality; suppose Mr. Eyre, who does live there, and who having a landed estate to the amount, perhaps, of two or three thousand pounds a year, and who being a very good master, very hospitable and kind to all his neighbours, employing great numbers of them and expending the greater part of his clear income amongst them, were, instead of so expending his income, to lend it to the Government of France, and to receive from that Government, the *interest* only every year. It is clear, that instead of *two thousand* pounds a year to expend among his neighbours, he would have only *two hundred* pounds a year to expend amongst them. Here would be a falling off of eighteen hundred pounds a year, which, at thirty pounds per family, would take away the means of living from *sixty families*. If this mode of disposing of Mr. EYRE'S income would deprive sixty families of the means of living, the loan which has been made to the Government of France *by the fundholders*, through the agency of the *Barings* and others, must deprive of the means of living *thirty three thousand three hundred and thirty three families!* And this is a truth, my good and perishing countrymen, which I defy the

WILLIAM GIFFORDS, the apostate SOUTHEYS, and all the herd of sinecure and hired writers to controvert. The *interest*, you will perceive, will come back again to England, and may possibly be expended amongst the people of England, but all the principal will be expended in France to animate French manufactures, commerce, trade and agriculture, all of which will be fed by the ruin of England.

The same will be going on, in other shapes, with regard to other foreign countries, and especially with regard to America. For can it be believed, that men, in the *Farming* and *Trading* line, will remain here to give their last shilling to the fundholders, and to see their families brought to the work-house, while a country of freedom extends its arms to afford protection to their property as well as to their persons? At this very moment hundreds of *farmers* are actually preparing to remove themselves and their property to America, and many are now upon the voyage. Now, then, let us see what will be the effects of operations of this sort. A man, who *rents* a farm, we will suppose, determines not to remain any longer under such a state of things. He sells off his stock, amounting we will say, to five thousand pounds. He turns this stock into money, and he carries the money to America. In England he gave employment and paid in poor-rates the means of supporting about twelve or fourteen families. Whence

are to come the means of supporting these families when he is gone? There is no one to *supply his place*; for there are thousands of farms now lying waste. These families, therefore, must go to augment the already intolerable burden of the poor-rates; they must go to add to the immense mass of misery already existing, while the farmer himself, though he has lost, by the low price of his stock, two thirds of his fortune, carries away the remainder, together with his valuable industry and skill, to add to the agriculture of America; to give employment to families there; to add to the population and power of that country; and to congratulate himself on his escape from ruinous taxation, and his family upon their escape from the horrors of a poor-house. And who can *blame* such a man? He must still love his country; but the first law of nature, *self preservation*, imperiously calls on him to abandon it for ever.

Yet, such is the attachment to country in the breast of every good man; so great are the powers of those feelings which bind men, and particularly the country people, to the place of their birth; so numerous and so strong are the ties which restrain them from an abandonment of their homes, that emigration is a thing which they would have avoided as they would have avoided death, under any circumstances but the present; but now, when they have no prospect of an end

to the calamities of the country ; when, instead of that *relief*, which peace was promised to bring, they feel their burdens not only already *doubled* by the operations of the paper money and funding system, but daily and hourly increasing ; when they see the ablest and most industrious of their labourers daily dropping into the ranks of the paupers ; when they see their former wealthy and provident acquaintances reduced, one after another, to bankruptcy, and their families taking shelter here and there under the roof of charity ; when they behold all this, and when to all this is added the reflection, that in a time of profound peace, and without any insurrection or any commotion in the country, laws have been passed to take away the personal safety of every man, to expose free conversation to the malignant construction of spies and informers, to render the intercourse between man and man dangerous and even perilous, and, in short, to embitter and to curse every moment of their lives, there is no room for balancing ; remove they must if they have any spirit left in them, and if they have the means to remove ; for to remain is certain misery, more than probable ruin, and possible death, though every action of their lives may be perfectly innocent, and even meritorious.

From these causes, and many others that might be mentioned, the country must, as long as this state of things lasts, go on declining and perishing. Its means of meeting the demands of the unrelenting funding

system will daily diminish ; and, therefore, there is no remedy, let Mr. CURWEN talk as loud and as big as he will, but that of reducing, and nearly annihilating, that thing which is called the *National Debt*, and also reducing the expences of the army to a *tenth* part of what it now is. And, indeed, it is the Debt which has created and which keeps up the army, for which there would be no occasion were it not for the weight of the taxes, which weight of taxes is the effect of the Debt.

The Great Question now to be determined is, WHETHER THE BOROUGH-MONGERS CAN CARRY ON THE MILITARY AND SUSPENSION SYSTEM AFTER THE FUNDING SYSTEM IS DESTROYED. This system, this order of things, an immense standing army, with Corps of Yeomanry established all over the country, with the press under the superintendence of the Magistrates, and with the personal safety of every man taken from him ; this system I call the *Borough-monger system*, it having been notoriously adopted *in order to resist and to crush the petitioners for parliamentary Reform*. Now, then, I am quite sure that the funding system *cannot* last long. I am quite sure of that. I know it with little less certainty than I know, that winter will follow the next summer. It may last two years, perhaps, and it may not expire wholly before the end of three or four years ; but I defy any measures, any powers, or any events, to save it from destruc-

tion at the end of a few years. The question, therefore, is, *not whether the funding system will be destroyed*; nor is it a question, whether the borough mongering system will continue as long as the funding system continues for I am convinced *that it will*, seeing that it appears to me impossible to carry on the funding system any longer without the borough mongering system. But the *grand and vital question* is, whether the borough-mongering system can support itself amidst all the uproar and turmoil of the breaking up of the funding system; and whether it can go on and *consolidate and perpetuate itself in this country*. This is the great question, my countrymen, upon which you have to exercise your judgment. This is the question, the solution of which will determine the state of England; and I frankly own to you, that it is a question which appears to me more difficult to settle than any one which ever before presented itself to my mind. You may have perceived a great change of tone in those who formerly talked so boldly about the endless resources of the country. They begin now to falter in their accents. They are frightened at the work of their own hands. They have surrounded themselves with all the securities which an army and the absolute power of imprisonment at pleasure can give them; but, be you assured, that they tremble within. They are scared at the desolation which they have brought upon the country. They are compelled to smile upon the fundholders; and yet they would fain that there were no such

people in existence? Baffled in all their projects and prospects, they know not which way to turn themselves. Their progress seems to be like that of the Gamester in Hogarth, and their situation at this particular stage is nearly approaching to that of his, when, having ventured and lost his last desperate stake, you see him gnashing his teeth, holding up above his head his two clenched fists, stamping upon the floor, and muttering curses, while the fund-holders, who sit round the table, are sneering and scoffing at his demoniac agitations.

Sometime ago, it was their project to cause the Bank to pay again in specie, and, agreeably to that project, they issued the new silver currency. It appears to be *now* their project to get fresh quantities of paper again afloat; and, if they can do that, the first effect of it will be, the disappearing of the new silver currency, which, though inferior to sterling value, will never long continue to circulate amidst such additional quantities of paper as will produce any sensible effect in the raising of prices and in the lowering the real amount of taxation. I do not clearly see the *possibility* of augmenting the quantity of paper in circulation seeing that the proprietors of lands and of goods have nothing to offer in pledge for it. But, besides, if it were to be effected, what tremendous mischief would it produce! Suppose the paper thus put out to reduce the value of the currency, one third. A man who has made a contract to day to receive three hundred pounds at a distant day, would in

fact receive only two thirds of what he had contracted for. This real breach of contract would take place with respect to all bargains made at this time, or recently made; all mortgages, bonds, leases, annuities, yearly wages of Servants, and every thing else of that description. Goods sold on long credit, would share the same fate; and as there is perhaps many millions worth of goods always sent to foreign countries upon long credit, when the money comes to be paid, it would be paid in currency of one-third less in value than the currency *calculated upon when the goods were sold*. Thus a merchant abroad, who must now send three hundred pounds sterling to discharge his debt to his creditor here, would, in fact, have to send only two hundred pounds sterling, in real money, because, two hundred pounds in real money would purchase three hundred pounds in the paper that would then be afloat.

Here, then, the waves of the system by suddenly taking a roll in this new direction, would overwhelm a new class of the community; and by this time, the discredit of the paper would become so notorious to the world, that the people of all foreign nations would keep aloof from it; would begin to shake their heads, and exclaim, "*Babylon the Great is fallen.*"

What I am disposed to think, however, is, that this project for getting out new quantities of paper money will not succeed; and yet, without it, the interest of the Debt cannot be

paid out of the taxes; for though standing armies and sedition bills and Habeas Corpus suspension bills are dreadfully powerful things, their power is not of that kind which enables people to pay taxes. In all human probability, then, the whole of the interest of the Debt and all the sinecures and pensions and salaries, and also the expences of a thundering standing army, will continue to be made up, by taxes, by loans from the Bank, by Exchequer bills, by every species of contrivance, to the latest possible moment, and until the whole of the paper system, amidst the war of opinions, of projects, of interests and of passions, shall go to pieces like a ship upon the rocks. And THEN comes the question; CAN THE BOROUGH-MONGERING SYSTEM OUTLIVE THIS TREMENDOUS WRECK? If it can; if the army can still be kept up, and if the personal safety of all the people, can still be suspended; if this breach between the two systems does NOT LET IN REFORM, it is hard to say how very low this country is to be sunk in the scale of nations. It would, in that case, become so humble, so poverty-stricken, so degraded, so feeble, that it would, in a few years, not have the power, even if it had the inclination, to defend itself against any invader. The people would become the most beggarly and slavish of mankind, and nothing would be left of England but the mere name, and that only as it were for the purpose of re-

minding the wretched inhabitants of the valour and public spirit of their forefathers.

Let us hope, however, that this is not to be the fate of our country. Let us hope that she is yet to be freed of the millstone that hangs around her neck. As for me, I shall never cease to use the best of my endeavours to save her from the dangers which threaten her utter destruction; and, I hope you will always bear in mind, that if I quit her shores for a while, it is only for the purpose of being still able to serve her. It is impossible for any man not to see clearly, that the sole choice now is between *silence* and *retreat*. Corruption has put on her armour and drawn her dagger. We must, therefore, fall back and cover ourselves in a way so as to be able to fight her upon more equal terms. The Giffords, the Southneys, the Walters, the Stuarts, the Stoddarts, and all the hireling crew, who were unable to answer with the pen, now rush at me with their drawn knife and exclaim, "*write on!*" To use the words of the Westminster Address, they shake the halter in my face, and rattle in my ears the keys of the dungeon, and then they exclaim with a malignant grin: "*Why do you not continue to write on, you coward?*" A few years ago, being at Barnet Fair, I saw a battle going on, arising out of some sudden quarrel, between a Butcher and the servant of a west-country Grazier. The Butcher, though vastly superior in point of size, finding that he was getting the worst

of it, recoiled a step or two, and *drew out his knife*. Upon the sight of this weapon, the Grazier turned about and ran off till he came up to a Scotchman, who was guarding his herd, and out of whose hand the former snatched a good ash stick about four feet long. Having thus got what he called a *long arm*, he returned to the combat, and, in a very short time, he gave the Butcher a blow upon the wrist, which brought his knife to the ground. The Grazier then fell to work with his stick in such a style as I never before witnessed. The Butcher fell down and rolled and kicked; but, he seemed only to change his position in order to insure to every part of his carcase a due share of the penalty of his baseness. After the Grazier had, apparently tired himself, he was coming away, when, happening to cast his eye upon the *knife*, he ran back and renewed the basting, exclaiming every now and then, as he caught his breath: "*dra thy knife, wo't!*" He came away a second time, and a second time returned and set on upon the carcase again: and this he repeated several times, exclaiming always when he re-commenced the drubbing: "*dra thy knife wo't!*" Till, at last, the Butcher was so bruised, that he was actually unable to stand or even to get up; and yet, such amongst Englishmen is the abhorrence of *foul fighting*, that not a soul attempted to interfere, and nobody seemed to pity a man thus unmercifully beaten.

It is my intention to imitate the conduct of this Grazier; to resort to

a *long arm*, and to combat corruption, while I keep myself out of the reach of her knife. Nobody called the *Grazier a coward*, because he did not stay to oppose his fists to a pointed and cutting instrument. My choice, as I said before (leaving all considerations of *Personal Safety* out of the question) lies between *silence* and *retreat*. If I remain here, all other means will be *first* used to reduce me to silence; and, if all those means fail, then will come the *dungeon*. Therefore, that I may still be able to write, and to write *with freedom*, too, I shall write, if I live, *from America*; and, my readers may depend on it, that it will not be more than *four months* from the *date of this address*, before the publication of the *Weekly Pamphlet* will be *resumed in London*, and will be continued very nearly as regularly as it has been for years past. My main object will be to combat corruption; but, I shall also be able to communicate some very useful information; especially as I shall now have, at one and the same time, the situation of both countries under my eye. If it be said, that I cannot expect to get any one *here* to print, or to publish, what I write in America, I ask, then, what is the use of *writing here*, seeing that the same obstacle would exist as to what should be written in England. Besides, I shall be as careful as I have been, not to write any thing that even a *Special Jury* would pronounce to be a *libel*. I have no desire to write libels. I have written none here. Lord Sid-

MOUTH was "*sorry to say*," that I had not written any thing that the Law Officers could prosecute with any chance of success. I do not remove for the purpose of writing libels, but for the purpose of being able to write what is *not* libellous. I do not retire from the combat with the Attorney General, but from a combat with a *dungeon, deprived of pen, ink and paper*. A combat with the Attorney General is quite *unequal* enough. That, however, I would have encountered. I know too well what a trial by *Special Jury* is. Yet that, or any sort of *trial* I would have staid to face. So that I could be sure of a *trial* of whatever sort, I would have run the risk. But, against the absolute power of imprisonment without even a *hearing*, for time unlimited, in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink and paper, and without any communication with any soul but the keepers; against *such a power* it would have been worse than madness to attempt to strive. Indeed, there could be *no striving* in a case, where I should have been as much at the disposal of the Secretary of State as are the shoes which he has upon his feet. No! I will go, where I shall not be as the shoes upon Lord Sidmouth's and Lord Castlereagh's feet. I will go where I can make sure of the use of pen, ink and paper; and, these two Lords may be equally sure, that in spite of every thing that they can do, unless they openly enact or proclaim a *censorship* on the Press, or cut off all commercial connection with

America, you, my good and faithful countrymen, shall be able to read what I write. In my Letter to *Earl Grosvenor*, I said, that something *very near to the chopping off my hand, or the picking out of your eyes*, should be done, before I would cease to write and you would cease to read. What has been done would not be *very far* from this, if I were to remain here; but, when I wrote that sentence, I had *a full knowledge of what was going to be done*, and, I had also resolved upon the course to pursue in order, as far as related to myself, to defeat its intention.

And now, my countrymen, before I set off, let me caution you against giving the smallest credit to any thing that Corruption's Press may assert of me. You have seen what atrocious falsehoods it has put forth in my *presence*; what, then, will it not do in my *absence*? I have written thousands of letters to various persons in all parts of the kingdom. I give any one leave to *make public any letter of mine*, accompanied by the certificate of any respectable friend of mine, that it is *in my hand-writing*. I challenge all those, whom I ever conversed with to say, that I ever uttered a *wish* to see overthrown any one of the Constitutional establishments of the kingdom; and, I most solemnly declare, that I never associated with any man, who professed, even in private, to entertain any such wish: but, on the contrary, all those with whom I have ever been intimate in politics, have always had in view the preservation of all the establishments and orders of

the kingdom as one of the objects of a *timely reform* of the Parliament.

The *sacrifice* I make, would under any other circumstances, be justly considered as enormous. The ceasing of a profit of *more than ten thousand pounds a year* from my works; the loss of property of various sorts, left scattered about in all manner of ways; the leaving of numerous friends and of local objects created under my own hands, and affording me so many pleasing sensations. But, all this weighs nothing, when compared with the horrid idea of being *silenced*; of sneaking to my farm and *quietly* leaving Corruption to trample out the vitals of my country, while her infamous press was revelling in unexposed falsehoods and calumnies levelled against myself and my friends; compared to this, no loss of fortune, no toils necessary to support a numerous family, no poverty, no bodily suffering: there is nothing of this kind that must not appear trifling, and even wholly unworthy of notice, when compared with the loss of that satisfaction which I shall now derive from still retaining the power of combating corruption, and from the hope that I shall never cease to entertain of returning to my beloved country in the day of the restoration of her freedom.

Every species of falsehood, deception, imposture, will Corruption now resort to, in order to blacken my character, to disfigure my motives, and to diminish the effect of my writings. But, my Countrymen, if you have witnessed so much of all these while I

was *present*, I need not fear that you will believe in them when I am *absent*. In more than ten publications, the writers have taken *my name, and made me the author!* They will now play off this trick more than ever. But, the *matter* of their publications will soon undeceive you.--- Nothing will be sent by me but "*Cobbett's Weekly Political Pamphlet,*" and nothing will be of my writing, which will not have at the foot of it the name of the same gentleman, whose name will appear as the publisher of this Address. However, I am not much afraid of your being imposed upon in this way; for, amidst the crowd of writers, I hope you now will as easily distinguish my voice as a lamb does that of its mother, though there be hundreds of others bleating at the same moment.

A mutual affection, a powerful impulse, equal to that out of which this wonderful sagacity arises, will, I hope, always exist between me and my hard used countrymen; an affection, which my heart assures me, no time, no distance, no new connections, no new association of ideas however enchanting, can ever destroy, or, in any degree enfeeble or impair. The sight of a free, happy, well fed and well clad

people will only tend to invigorate my efforts to assist in restoring you to the enjoyment of those rights and of that happiness, which are so well merited by your honesty, your sincerity, your skill in all the useful arts, your kind-heartedness, your valour, all the virtues which you possess in so super-eminent a degree. A splendid mansion in America will be an object less dear to me than a cottage on the skirts of Waltham Chase or of Botley Common. Never will I own as my friend him who is not a friend of the people of England. I will never become a *Subject* or a *Citizen* in any other state, and will always be a *foreigner* in every country but England. Any foible that may belong to your character, I shall always willingly allow to belong to my own. And the celebrity which my writings have obtained, and which they will preserve, long and long after Lords Liverpool and Sidmouth and Castlereagh are rotten and forgotten. I owe less to my own talents than to that discernment and that noble spirit in you, which have at once instructed my mind and warmed me heart: and my beloved Countrymen, by you well assured, that the last beatings of that heart will be love for the people, for the happiness and the renown of En-

gland; and hatred of their corrupt, hypocritical, dastardly and merciless foes.

WM. COBBETT.

P.S. There will of necessity, be about three months before the Weekly Political Pamphlet will be revived; but, in the mean time, my readers will find occupation in reading over and over again what I have addressed to them within the last five or six months. I beseech them to keep all the nice Little Books that they have got; not to be humbugged by any of the publications of Corruption; they will find all my fore-tellings *come true*. I exhort them to exercise all the patience and fortitude they are masters of: not to be enveigled into any foolish and fruitless attacks upon bakers, and butchers and the like; never to give up one jot of their rights of parliaments chosen annually, and to a vote for every man twenty one years of age: and never to give up the hope

that this right will be restored to them along with that happiness to which their industry and honesty and public spirit so justly entitle them. They may be assured, that if I have life for only a year or two at the farthest, I shall be back with them again. The beautiful country, through which I have so lately travelled, bearing, upon every inch of it, such striking marks of the industry and skill of the people, never can be destined to be inhabited by slaves. To suppose such a thing possible would be at once to libel the nation and to blaspheme against Providence. Let my readers not fear my finding out the means of communicating to them whatever I write. They will see the Political Pamphlet revive and be continued, until the day when they will find me again dating my addresses to them from London or from Botley.

WM. COBBETT.

Liverpool, 28th, March, 1817.

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